



# **Fighter Country Partnership**

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer  
The Renaissance at Westgate  
Tuesday, February 7, 2012

**Good evening.**

**It's a real honor to be here – virtually in my own back yard – to be with the men and women of the Fighter Country Partnership.**

**Your mission is simple – Support the men – women -- families -- and mission of Luke Air Force Base.**

**Your mission ... is my mission. It's our mission.**

**As a child raised on a military base, I have a special affection for our Armed Forces and the men and women who serve in it.**

**And, as a founding member of Fighter Country Partnership, I'm doing all I can to help secure the base's long-term future by encouraging the Department of Defense to select Luke as a training site for the F-35 Lightning II -- Joint Strike Fighter.**

**I know the Fighter Country Partnership has an amazing track record. Through years of hard work and dedication -- you have established yourselves as a constant presence in the West Valley -- and you've made the work of both legislators and elected officials on behalf of Luke Air Force Base that much easier.**

**There are so many things that go beyond just protecting the mission, and FCP is an example of an organization that gets it right!**

**Sponsoring and hosting events like the Beautiful Women Inside & Out women's wellness expo is an example of things Fighter Country Partnership does to improve the quality of life of our military members and their families.**

**Thousands of Arizonan's look forward to Luke Days and the opportunity to see America's planes, up close and flying with heart-pounding precision.**

**Luke Days and its spectacular air show would not be as successful -- without the generous help and contributions and support from FCP and its donors; donors such as:**

- Empire Southwest;**
- Cre8tive Events;**
- G Farms;**
- APS;**
- The Wigwam;**
- And, the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services ...**

**These businesses and others stepped up to make the air show another great success. Protecting the mission of Luke is also very important ... and it's something everyone in this room is dedicated to doing.**

**This past November, I traveled to Washington, with Mayor Scruggs and Michael Bidwill to meet with Air Force Secretary Michael Donley.**

**We discussed linking the F-16 transition from Luke with the arrival of the F-35 to ensure the base is not adversely impacted from a drop in plane numbers and flights.**

**Secretary Donley assured me the Air Force is committed to bringing the F-35s to Luke and any negative impact their arrival might have will be minimized.**

**This assurance was reaffirmed -- and I was very excited that the Air Force has maintained Luke as the preferred alternative training facility with its recent Draft EIS release.**

**It's important now that we focus on the Public Comment Hearings on these EIS statements.**

**Since the first announcement, FCP has been a driving force in the efforts to secure the next generation Joint Strike Fighter.**

**And, I'm counting on your leadership in the public comment process once again.**

**You're a member of this organization because you believe in Luke Air Force Base -- and its mission. You believe in the men and women who serve in our military.**

**Luke needs the support of its communities and neighbors so it can continue to train the best pilots in the world ... right here in our backyard!**

**And, we will never forget that freedom comes at a cost.**

**Luke has lost Major Troy Gilbert and Master Sergeant Randy Gillespie since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom.**

**And last year, Luke lost another one of its own.**

**Lt. Col. Frank "Bruiser" Bryant was killed in action in Afghanistan.**

**Men and women from Luke are "in the fight" everyday -- and FCP is ready to assist whenever tragedy might strike.**

**With 175 Airmen deployed -- many in harm's way -- Fighter Country Partnership is a vital part of the mission I spoke of earlier -- the one we have come together this evening to hold high and salute.**

**So, I will close by saluting you, your patriotism and your commitment to Luke and its eternal vigilance in defense of this great country.**

**May God bless you and your families, our Great State of Arizona, and may God always bless and protect the United States of America and those who serve under her flag.**

**Thank you.**